

THE
Wicked Ruler:

OR,

The Mischiefs

OF

ABSOLUTE ARBITRARY POWER,

A

SERMON

PREACH'D at BELFAST,

December the 18th, 1745.

Being the Day of the GENERAL FAST, Ap-
pointed by the Government.

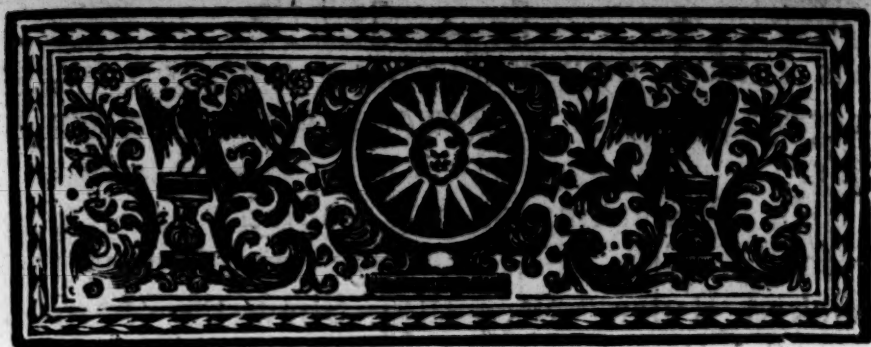
By GILBERT KENNEDY. M. A. <

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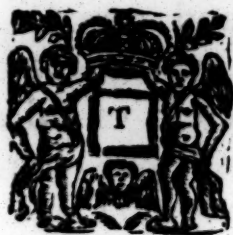
MDCCLXV.





PROVERBS xxviii. 15.

*As a roaring Lion, and a ranging Bear,
so is a wicked Ruler over the poor People.*



HIS Book of Proverbs is a collection of wise Sayings, and moral Maxims founded on Experience, and the observations Solomon had made with regard to the different issues and tendencies of Virtue and Vice ; and all of them center in this general conclusion, that Virtue is true Wisdom, and the proper good and happiness of Man ; and Vice, on the other hand, his greatest Ill and Misery. Which observation will hold good in whatever respects and relations Man is considered ; whether in his individual or political Capacity : The practice of Virtue and Righteousness being no less the Foundation of the Stability and Prosperity of Kingdoms and Common-wealths, than of particular Persons. And accordingly Solomon in this book often observes the mighty advantages accruing to Society from a righteous, faithful, and impartially upright Administration : And on the other hand, how pernicious and destructive a Wicked, Unrighteous, and Tyrannical Government, is. Particularly, in the

words I have now read. *As a roaring Lion, and a ranging Bear, so is a wicked Ruler over the poor People.*

IN Discourſing on this Subject,

I ſhall, **Firſt**, Briefly give the Character of a wicked Ruler. **Secondly**, Shew the Miſchiefs that muſt follow from a corrupt, wicked, and unrighteous Government.

AND then ſhall make ſome proper Application ; wherein I will Exemplify the Doctrine of the Text in the caſe of ſome former Reigns in *England* ; and ſhow the great Folly and Madneſs of encouraging and abetting any meaſures that have a tendency to introduce again ſuch a violent and oppreſſive Government in theſe Nations : And conſequentially, how much it is the Duty and Intereſt of all Ranks to unite Chearfully and Vigourouſly in the Support and Defence of our preſent happy Conſtitution : And laſt of all, agreeably to the purpoſe of our Aſſembling this Day, conclude with a ſerious Exhortation to Repentance and univerſal Reformation ; as the moſt Effectual means to ſecure the favour and Protection of Almighty God, and procure the Divine Bleſſing upon his Majeſties Arms for frustrating the horrid Deſigns of our Enemies, and reſtoring our Peace and Tranquility.

THE great end of Government, and of Mens entering into civil Societies, is the Preſervation and Security of their juſt Rights, Liberties, and Properties, againſt unjuſt Force and Violence. If all Men would live according to the Dictates of right Reaſon, and the Law of their Nature, there would be no need of political Conjunctions and Affociations. For Nature, if Men would but attend and conform

form to the Dictates of it, hath made sufficient provision for the practise of all those Duties, of Justice and Equity, Charity and Benevolence, which Mankind owe to each other; and which are Essential to the comfort and happiness of human Life. These are deeply rooted in our Nature by the benevolent Author of our Beings; who hath originally implanted in us benevolent Propensions and Instincts, to secure a mutual intercourse of charitable Offices among Men; which, in due proportion, are a sufficient provision against all Injustice and Injury from one another. But though God made Man Upright, yet hath he sought out many Inventions. And as these benevolent Instincts are often Disproportionate, and prevailed over by the private and selfish Affections; as there will always be unreasonable Men, who through Avarice and Ambition, Malice and Envy, and such like destructive Passions, prevailing over the natural sense of Honour, Justice, and Equity, will be making In-Roads and Incursions upon their Neighbours, and invading their Liberties and Properties; Civil Government became Essentially necessary for the Defence and Security of these against such unjust Violence; and men were obliged to enter into Societies, whereby the united Force of the Community is engaged for the Safety and Protection of every Individual. And in regard it is necessary that Laws should be made for the good of the Society, enforced by proper Sanctions; and that these should be punctually executed in the punishment of Evil-Doers, and Reward of such as do Well; and it being impracticable, that these matters should be attended to by every Individual; it is Essential to Civil Government, that it may attain

its Design, that the Powers of Legislation and Execution, the Care and Guardianship of the Interests, the Lives, Liberties and Properties of the Community, should be devolved upon one or more of approved Wisdom and Integrity ; in whom the whole Force and Strength of the Community should center for that purpose ; and who should make the Welfare of the State, their Sole business and concern.

Now, from attending to the End and Design of Civil Government, it is easy to discern the Ingredients that should concur to make up the Character of a good Governour : Generous Ardor for Public good, and a Tender and Fatherly concern for the interests of his People ; Wisdom to contrive and enact good and wholesome Laws ; Steadiness and impartiality, inflexible Justice, and uncorrupt Integrity in the Administration.

THE reverse is the Character of a wicked Ruler. ---He has no concern for Public good : No sincere regard for the Happiness and Prosperity of his People : But gives himself up perhaps to lazy Indolence and Inactivity, Luxury, Amusements, and Pleasure of every kind ; intrusting the weighty and important matters of State to others, selfish designing Men, Sycophants and Parasites, who make use of the power Delegated to them for base and dishonourable purposes ; Plundering and Oppressing the Subject ; aggrandising and enriching themselves and favourites from the spoils and Tyrannical Depredations of the honest and Industrious in the Community. Whenever a Spirit of this kind possesses the Governing part of a Kingdom or Commonwealth ; when the Prince, not deigning to attend to Public Affairs himself, suffers matters of State

to be conducted by a peculiar Favourite, who perhaps from being a mean Minister of pleasure, hath been mounted up to be Prime Minister of State; with whom it is as a sport to do Mischief, what a wretched state must the poor People be in?---Again, He is a wicked Ruler, who frames and enacts Laws directly Iniquitous and Oppressive; who establisheth Iniquity by Law; or, who acteth in open and avowed contradiction to the known Fundamental Laws of the Society, framed and enacted by public Wisdom for the good and happiness of it; who governs by meer Arbitrary will; and considers his Subjects only as so many Slaves and Vassals, whose Lives and Fortunes are under his absolute Command, which he may Dispose of in any manner that he shall judge most subservient to promote the Glory and Splendor of his Crown, and the purposes of his Ambition and Avarice; who uses his Power to overawe and strike Terror, and beget a servile Submission, rather than for the safety and protection of his Subjects, to enforce his own illegal and Arbitrary Measures, and not for their good and happiness. He that is thus intent upon what is commonly called Glory among Princes (which is by far the greatest part considered as somewhat distinct from the Happiness and Prosperity of their People) who considers himself as having an Interest separate from that of the Community; and imagines his People, their Lives and Fortunes, are only for his sake, and not he for theirs; who rules with a Tyrannical Sway, without thinking himself under any limitations from Law, or Equity; who tramples upon the fundamental Laws of the Kingdom at his pleasure; And especially, if he presumes to Model the Religious Sen-

Sentiments of his Subjects, to think and judge for them in matters of Religion ; not only to restrain such Opinions as are inconsistent with Peace and good order in the State, which to be sure is the business of every chief Magistrate ; but to impose under severe and heavy Penalties, particular Forms and Modes of Worship ; and the belief of Doctrines, no way essential, but disputable and trifling ; and perhaps (which in many Christian Nations is the case) Doctrines contrary to Christianity and common sense ; contrary to our natural notions of God, and plainly destructive of Piety and Virtue ; when he will not suffer his Subjects, otherwise behaving themselves as good Subjects and usefull Members of the Community, to Worship God according to their Consciences ; but by Sanguinary Edicts, or other more moderate Penalties, will enforce their Submission to, and Compliance with, the established Standard ; And thus sits in the Seat of God ; tramples upon the Rights of Conscience, which are of all others the most Sacred and unalienable ; and will judge in matters which are only Cognisable before an higher Tribunal ; and inflict severe punishment upon all who have the Conscience and Courage to contemn and disobey his wicked Edicts ; and either by Death or Banishment deprive the Community of its best and honestest Members (for these are the Persons that by their Conscientious tenderness expose themselves most to the Fury of Tyrants and Persecutors) or, by depriving them of their Liberty and Property render their Lives miserable ; He that thus tramples upon the Rights and Liberties of Mankind, Civil and religious, is a Tyrant, and a wicked Ruler.

To

To which may be added, that even Supposing Tyranny and Persecution out of the case; that the conduct of the Chief Governour towards his Subjects were in every instance bounded by the Laws; so that his Subjects, enjoyed Safety and protection, and all their legal Immunities and Privileges under his Administration: Yet he justly merits this character, even considered in his public capacity as a Ruler, if in his private conduct he be not governed by the Fear of God, and a Sense of Religion and Virtue; but be given up to Profaneness and Licentiousness of conduct and manners. For by this means he not only wrongs his own Soul, but the community; on account of the bad influence his Example must have on all in inferiour Stations. A Wicked King makes a wicked Court: And the Nobility and Gentry of the Nation being corrupted at Court in their Principles and manners, must of necessity Diffuse and Propagate all manner of Debauchery, all the polite and fashionable Vices, in the Several Districts and corners of the Land where they have their respective power and influence. And when once a General Dissolution of manners prevails (as we know it Did remarkably in King CHARLES the II^s Reign by means of the extreme Depravity and Corruption of the Court) what Misery, Disorder, and Confusion must ensue in a State? Luxury and Debauchery naturally destroy the Hardiness, Courage, and manly Vigour of a Nation; dissolve them in Sloth and Effeminacy; prepare them for Corruption and Bribery; and are the high-road to Slavery.

BUT I go on to the II. Head, The Evils and Mischiefs naturally consequent upon a corrupt, Wicked, and Unrighteous Government.

WELL might Solomon compare a wicked Ruler to a roaring Lion, or, a ranging Bear. For, like these Savage Beasts of prey, he lives upon Plunder and Rapine ; making Havock of the Lives and Properties of his Subjects, whenever this may minister to the unworthy purposes of his Ambition or Avarice.-----When a man holds his Life and Property by so precarious a Tenure as the Arbitrary will of an Absolute Lord ; limited in his conduct by no Settled measures of Law or Justice ; but governed Solely by wanton Humour and Caprice ; what a Wretched and truly Pitiab! State of mind must he be in ; unhappy to the highest Degree ; perplexed always with uneasy Jealousies and Fears ; secure of nothing he Possesses : uncertain what moment he, and all he hath, his Life and Property, must be yielded up a Sacrifice to the Lawless will and Ambition of his Lord. As the servile Devotionist, can never think of his God, without Horror and Aversion ; whom he paints to himself in the frightfull colours of an Arbitrary Tyrannical Lord, *Reaping where he hath not Sown, and Gathering where he hath not Strawed* ; and cannot help discovering his inward Anxiety and fearfull Apprehensions by a morose and gloomy Sullenness ; so, the most dismal and horrible darkness, exclusive of any degree of light and comfort, must necessarily overspread the mind of the poor abject Slave, who considers himself subject to the unlimited will of an Absolute Lord ; void of a Sense of Honour, justice and Liberty ; governed in his conduct entirely by the cruel Maxims of Absolute Tyranny ; who treats the Eternal distinction between Just and unjust as a meer Chimera , who regards only his own

own Glory ; and provided this is accomplished, minds not by what means ; but every thing is Just and Honourable that will serve his Ends ; Strangling and cutting of Throats, Imprisonment, Confiscation, Banishment, and every sort of Cruelty and Oppression. The black and hellish dispositions, of servile Dread, Anxious Distrust, Gloomy Despair, must intirely possess the Minds, and discover themselves in the Wretched and Mournfull Aspect, of all such as are under Slavery ; subject to Absolute Lawless Power.-----And the plain Consequence of such a Dispirited Abject State, is, a listlessness to Industry ; an unconcernedness about all Commerce and Trade ; which is one great Source of the Wealth and flourishing of a Nation. For to what purpose apply to Labour and Industry ; since whatever is acquired I cannot look upon as my Property ; cannot enjoy the Fruits of my Labour any longer than a cruel and Ambitious Tyrant pleases ; but must Resign them at his call. When a Man hath no security for the undisturbed Enjoyment of his Property, and is not at full liberty to dispose of it in such manner as he judgeth proper for his own, or, the good of his posterity : This necessarily cutteth the Sinews of Industry : Destroyeth all Spirit and Activity : Draweth on Sloth and Idleness ; and of course wretched Poverty and Misery.-----The same is to be said with regard to the cultivation and improvement of all Liberal Arts and Sciences. Slavery hath a natural tendency to enervate the mind ; to cramp the native force and vigour of the understanding ; and to hinder progress and improvement in every valuable branch of knowledge and Learning ; which was never known to flourish

to any considerable degree, but under the influence of Civil Liberty. Witness, the many Centuries of Ignorance and Barbarism that preceded the Reformation : Which, along with the revival of pure and uncorrupt Christianity, and of Just Notions with regard to the Civil and Religious liberties of Mankind; is, the *Æra* whence the revival of Learning is to be Dated. Especially, under Absolute Governments, all improvement in those branches of Knowledge which are of the greatest importance to Human happiness, is Marred and Obstructed : Religion and Politic's. All freedom of thinking and Debating on these Subjects is discouraged ; and wisely ; for the consequence of such Freedom certainly would be, the opening Peoples Eyes ; and discovering the false foundations on which the received System of Politic's is built ; so that People would turn Mutinous and troublesome ; and not submit so tamely to such unjust Tyranny and Usurpation. And with regard to Religion ; as it seems to be a Maxim with most Princes, which hath always been strongly inculcated upon them by Designing Men ; that a strict Uniformity with regard to belief and Modes of Worship, is one of the best means, and absolutely necessary, to secure the Public peace, and preserve good order in the State (Though the Scheme of an Universal Toleration, and Liberty of Conscience, so as not to persecute, or inflict either the greater or more moderate Penalties on any for their Religious Sentiments ; provided they have no tendency to influence civil Faction, or promote Rebellion in the State : Would never of itself ; and Experience testifies, in those States, where such Liberty is allowed, doth not, occasion any Disorder

or

or Disquiet) yet as this is perhaps the Notion of most Princes ; many of whom seem to regard Religion only in a Political view ; and therefore will always be sure to favour that Religious System, that seems to tally best with, and be most subservient to, their Political one ; for this reason, under all Slavish Governments, it is as hazardous to think and speak freely about religion as Politic's. And the only method of safety is, for a man never to think of these Matters at all ; but tamely give up his Conscience and Understanding to the King ; or those, to whom this Spiritual Empire and Domination, is committed. For if he shall make a free use of his Reason ; and presume to differ in the least Jota from the Established System : The consequence must be fatal with regard to this World ; and, if the powers claimed by some Ecclesiastic's be valid, in the next too. By the King he is deprived of his Life and Estate ; and the Spiritual Fathers consign him over to Hell fire. Indeed Ignorance and Persecution are the necessary Props and Supports of Violent and Oppressive Governments.

THUS Oppressive is the Wicked Ruler at home ; and in proportion to his Power, is the Terror of his Neighbours abroad. For he thirsts after Glory ; and prompted by a wicked Ambition, he forms projects for enlarging his Dominions, and multiplying the number of his Slaves and Vassals ; and there can be no end to his Ambitious Designs, as long as he is not the Universal Monarch. Immediately, on some pretence or other, (for such are never wanting) War is Declared ; Numerous Armies are Levied and take the Field ; horrid Blood-shed ensues ; the Lives of Multitudes of his Subjects are wantonly

wantonly thrown away ; and all for the Glory of the Grand Monarque. What dreadful and destructive Wars doth he plunge his miserable subjects into ; who must serve him with their Lives and Fortunes, whether in a just cause or not.----- Observe farther, That to compleat the misery of poor People, under such a wretched Government, they have not one wicked Ruler to deal with ; but his Name is, Legion, for they are many. What the King leaves, his Ministers and Courtiers take ; and all such as have the least Power and Influence in any corner of the Land, oppress their Dependents, by Arbitrary and Exorbitant Exactions ; and are as much arbitrary Lords in their Sphere, as the King in his. The poor People are hardly considered as of the same Species ; and they think them only designed as so many Tools and Instruments, to provide for the Support of their Luxury, Grandeur, and Magnificence.-----Lastly, we may take notice of what was before hinted ; that from a wicked debauched Court, a Corruption of Principles, and Dissolution of manners are diffused and propagated thro' a Nation, which both in the Nature of things, bring Ruin and Destruction on a People, and by the just Judgment of God. Thus Balaam, though he would not directly Curse the Children of Israel : Yet put Balak on a Stratagem as effectual, which answered his purpose as well ; to seduce the People into Idolatry ; which drew down the Vengeance of God upon them, so that they were intirely Routed.-----The Character of a violent oppressive Government, and the mischievous Consequences of it ; cannot be better represented than in the words of the Prophet, when by the Divine command

mand he endeavoured to deter the Children of Israel from their Rebellious purpose of shaking off the Theocracy, and taking a King from among themselves. 1 SAM. viii. 11-----*This will be the manner, says he, of the King that will Reign over you : He will take your Sons and appoint them for himself, for his Chariots, and to be his Horsemen ; and some shall run before his Chariots :----And he will set them to Ear his Ground, and to Reap his Harvest, and to make his Instruments of War, and Instruments of his Chariots. And he will take your Daughters to be Confectioners, and to be Cooks, and to be Bakers. And he will take your Fields, and your Vineyards, and your Oliveyards, even the best of them, and give them to his Servants : And he will take the Tenth of your Seed, and of your Vineyards, and give to his Officers, and to his Servants. And he will take your Men-Servants, and your Maid-Servants ; and your goodliest young Men, and your Asses, and put them to his Work. He will take the Tenth of your Sheep ; and ye shall be his Servants.* The Histories of the Eastern Nations of the World, who have long lived under the exercise of such Absolute Arbitrary Dominion, shew how inexpressibly great a Calamity such Governments are to Mankind. And if we look around us, where Tyranny prevails ; we see nothing but the most abject Slavery ; with its usual attendants, Dispiritedness, Indolence, Poverty, Misery, and Desolation.

THE Application of what hath been said, is---
That we conceive an hearty Abhorrence and Detestation of this Monster, big with such innumerable Evils and Mischiefs : Absolute, Arbitrary, Power :
without

without any foundation in reason or Scripture to support it ; and whereof these Nations heretofore have many times felt the dismal and horrible effects.

ABSOLUTE Power is a Prerogative only safe with a being absolutely Perfect, Wise, and Good ; who therefore, we may be Secure, will not abuse it to any mischievous Purposes ; since he cannot be influenced by Want or Weakness, Malice or Envy, to meditate any pernicious Design, or to do Evil. The Inconveniences of Absolute Government seem much greater than those that attend a State of Nature ; and Men have even better Security for their Lives and Properties in the one case than in the other. Because they shall be better able to make Head against any Power that may be imagined to Attack them in a State of Nature ; than against a Tyrant, backed with a strong Military Force. Besides Absolute Power is utterly inconsistent with the natural Freedom and Independency of Mankind. For, nothing can be more evident, than that antecedently to compact and agreement ; * *among beings of the same Species, promiscuously born to all the same Advantages of Nature, and the use of the same Faculties*, there must be Originally, a perfect Equality and Independency ; so as that no one can possibly have more Power and Authority over another, than that other hath over him. No Man can justly claim any Power over me, my Person or Estate, without my own consent ; and only so much, as I Voluntarily give him ; and whatever is assumed over and above this, is Unreasonable and

* See Mr. Locks Treatise on Government Part : 2. ch . 2.

and unjust, meer Tyranny and Usurpation ; and what I have a natural inherent Right to Resist and Oppose. Children, no doubt, in their Infancy, before they are capable of Judging for themselves, must be absolutely Governed by the Judgement of their Parents or other proper Guardians ; but maturity of Reason manumits them ; and sets them at Liberty, without their own consent, from all other Law and Authority, properly so called. So that Dominion can only be founded on Consent and voluntary Donation. And it is not to be supposed that any Number of Men, uniting together in Civil Society for mutual Safety and Preservation, should be so little Tender of their most valuable Interests ; as to invest any Person or Persons with unbounded Dominion over their Lives, Liberties, and Estates ; Or, if they should be so Infatuated ; would such concession, extorted perhaps, or, given into through Simplicity, render the exercise of Absolute Arbitrary Power Just and Equitable ? An Absolute Power, in the first place, over ones Life, is not capable of being conveyed at all ; since no Man hath that to himself. And besides, such Concession before mentioned cannot alter the nature of, Right, and Wrong ; and render it equitable for any Governour to bring all the mischiefs on his simple and infatuated Dependents, naturally arising from Slavery and Tyranny. If a Fool, or, a Madman, should desire me to knock him on the Head, and beat out his Brains ; would that be a sufficient Warrant and Authority for me to do so ? In other cases it is always pronounced Unjust for any to take advantage of the Weakness and Simplicity of his Neighbour to his prejudice.-----But doth not Conquest convey a just title to Absolute Power ?---If the spring of entring

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into War, be Ambition or Avarice ; In this case it will certainly be universally allowed that all Power exercised meerly by virtue of Conquest, is Tyranny and Usurpation. If the Conquest falls out in consequence of necessary Self-Defence ; or, seeking reparation for Injuries received ; all that the conqueror seems to have any Just and Equitable title to, is, to have the Injury done him, and the Damages he hath sustained in the Prosecution of his just right, repaired : And that proper measures be settled for preventing the like Injuries for the Future ; and if sufficient Satisfaction be Obtained with regard to these several Articles ; he can have no Authority at all over the Conquered, without their own consent ; far less, to render them his Absolute Slaves and Vassals.-----But Kings have a Divine right to Govern, and are accountable to God only, and not subject to controll or limitation from any mortal. No matter how Wicked the Ruler, we are obliged in Conscience to Submission.-----If by Divine right be meant, that Government is agreeable to the will of God, as being eminently conducive to the well being and happiness of Mankind ; In this sense Princes have a Divine Right to Govern, and they are the *Ministers of God*. But if by Divine Right, be meant ; a Right, founded either on an immediate Divine Commission ; or, Direct lineal Succession from such as had a Divine Commission ; independent on the choice and voluntary consent of the Society ; not subject to Forfeiture ; even in case of the most manifest Abuses, and notorious Violations of Law and Justice : Such Divine Commission ought certainly to be Produced ; or, such direct lineal Succession indisputably demonstrated : That we might be
able

able to discern, among the various Claimants, which are our rightful Governours. And if such Divine Title could be made appear ; it is not at all to be supposed, that it would be Absolute, without any restrictions or limitations : That the infinitely Good, and tender Parent of Mankind, would make out such an unlimited Commission, whereby Mankind and their most valuable Interests should be left at the Mercy, and subjected to the unlimited Will, of any ; who, instead of promoting the Common Good, might, and in all probability would, be tempted through Malice or Envy, Avarice or Ambition, to abuse their Power to common Misery and Destruction ; without the People's having so much as the least Right to stand up in their own Defence ; and to attempt the redress of any Injuries done them. Such a pretended Divine Commission would carry its own Confutation along with it ; and would be a direct Repugnancy to the Wisdom and Goodness of God. But as there are no particular Persons or Families that can pretend to any immediate Divine Commission for this purpose ; or, yet are able to demonstrate their lineal Succession from such as had it : The true source and origin of Power must be resolved into the Donation and Voluntary consent of the community ; and Government be reckoned, as *St. Peter* calls it, * *Anthropine Ktisis*, the Creature, or Ordinance of Man : Though indeed as it is Essentially necessary to the well being and happiness of Mankind ; and must therefore be concluded agreeable to the will of the benevolent Author and Governour of the World ; it is with great propriety called by *St. Paul*, § the Ordinance of God. Sovereignty there-

* *Ep. ii. 13.*§ *ROM. xiii. 2.*

fore belongs not to any by Nature, but is founded on Compact and Donation; and is a Sacred trust; for which the Party is accountable, not to God only, but his Constituents; who, not for every Instance of Misconduct indeed (Governours being frail and fallible as well as others) but in case of General Male-administration, and obvyous Design to subvert the Constitution and the Laws (which was the case at the Revolution) have an undoubted Right to Resist and Oppose such a Wicked Ruler; assert and vindicate their Rights and Liberties, even by Force; if no other means, can be Effectual; and to rid themselves of Tyranny and Oppression. For Tyranny dissolves the relation of Sovereign and Subject; so that they are no longer to be considered as in a State of Civil Government, but in a State of Nature; and the same Remedy must be allowed against the exorbitances and Oppressions of a wicked King; as in a State of Nature against any that would invade their Life or Property.

THIS is the voice of reason; and likewise of Revelation: Which doth not impair Mens natural rights; the general precepts of it being always to be understood with such limitations and exceptions as right reason Dictates. And this is the Foundation of that Glorious and happy Constitution we live under; so wisely tempered, as on the one hand, to invest Majesty with the utmost Powers that a wise and Virtuous Prince could desire: And on the other, Effectually to secure the Freedom and Liberty of the Subject: And, where it is steadily maintained, and kept up to; sufficient to render our King the greatest Prince; and, us, the happiest People in the World.

MANY

MANY Attacks have been made upon our Constitution ; and Attempts to introduce the Despotic System of Politic's in England ; particularly, under the Reigns of the *Steuarts* : whose Administration, from the first to the last of these unhappy Princes, was one continued Invasion of the Liberties of the Subject ; and the spring of inexpressible Calamities to these Nations. Tyranny and Persecution were the distinguishing Characteristic's of these Reigns. King *James* the first laid the Foundation ; and did all he could in his Lifetime to advance the regal Authority, and Prerogative. Which Scheme was still more vigourously and openly pursued in the succeeding Reign of King *Charles* the first ; who being from his Infancy tainted with Arbitrary Principles, no sooner mounted the Throne, than he formed a resolution to carry the regal Authority much higher than the King his Father or any of his Predecessors had done ; and accordingly for the first fifteen Years of his Reign Governed most Arbitrarily and Tyrannically. He raised Loans, Excises, Coat and Conduct-Money, Tunnage and Poundage, Knight-hood and Ship-Money, without Authority of Parliament. He granted Monopolies without number ; and forced the Merchants to unlade their Goods at such Ports as was most for the advantage of the Monopolizers. He forced new Oaths on his Subjects : Erected new Judicatories without Law : Suffered the most unheard of Cruelties, and Oppressions to be committed on the Subject in these Courts ; and particularly in the Star-Chamber ; the severity whereof fell chiefly on such as pretended to dispute the Prerogative Royal : And the High Commission Court, which under colour of putting a stop to Schism,

Schism, oppressed, as Puritans, those that refused to submit to a Despotic Power; and was every whit as bad as the Romish Inquisition. And the Privy Council too set up by degrees for an Absolute Court, which did not look upon its self as obliged to be subject to the Laws; so that great numbers, to avoid these Calamities, went beyond Sea, some to America, others to the Low-Countries, to the great detriment of the Manufactures of the Kingdom. He imprisoned divers Members of the House of Commons for what they did and said there; contrary to the Privilege of Parliament; who were kept in such close Confinement, that the Health of many was greatly Impaired, and some Died. Many of the most considerable Gentry and Merchants were Imprisoned for refusing to pay his Illegal Taxes, without being admitted to Bail, in open violation of the Rights of an English Subject, except in cases of Treason or Felony. Soldiers were billeted on the People which they were obliged to Maintain. Such of the Commonalty as refused to submit to his Arbitrary Impositions, were forced to serve as Soldiers; persons of Rank, were confined to places at a great distance from their Habitations; or, if they refused to be so confined, were committed to the several Jails in London. When his Parliaments would not come into his measures, he Dissolved them; and for many Years together did not call a Parliament, during which time he Ruled as Arbitrarily as the Grand Seignior. In order to establish his favourite Scheme; Ministers were hired to preach up as a Scripture Doctrine, that Subjects are obliged on pain of Damnation to obey the Kings will, without examination; and for refusing to Licence one

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of these Sermons (Sibthorps) Archbishop Abbot was suspended from his Archiepiscopal Functions, and confined to one of his Country-Houses. For enforcing his Arbitrary Measures thirty thousand Pounds were privately remitted into the Low-Countries, and Germany, to raise and equip a certain number of Foreign Troops to be brought over for his Majesties Service (to subdue his People) into England. He raised an Army to force the Kirk to an Uniformity with the Church of England in Worship and Discipline. And though he Professed the Reformed Religion; yet Papists were greatly countenanced; and many things done most unfriendly to Protestantism. A Pope's Nuncio resided openly in London; several of the principal Ministers of State were avowed Papists; Men, whom all the nation looked upon as inclinable to Popery, were preferred in the Church. The Laws against Papists, were dispensed with; compositions were made with Popish Recusants; and all the Instances of the Parliament against them, in vain; while such as were against Popish Innovations were severely prosecuted under the Name of Puritans. Many innovations tending to Popery, that could not be justified by the Canons, were introduced into the Church; no regard had to tender Consciences in any, even the most insignificant points; by the Kings direction, the Queen wrote a circular Letter to the Catholic's to assist him in the Scottish War, and against the Parliament; and there are not wanting shrewd suspicions of a Correspondence with the Irish Rebels. It is certain, that the King, by the Earl of Glamorgan, concluded a private Treaty with them; whereby the Roman Catholic's in *Ireland* were

were to enjoy the free and Public use and Exercise of their Religion, and a considerable number of the Livings and Benefices; and they, on their part, were to send Ten Thousand Men into *England*.---- And though the violent end of this Unfortunate King, might have deterred his Successors from treading in his Footsteps; yet the same violent proceedings were carried on in the following Reigns. King *Charles* the Second, 'tis true, was a Prince who greatly loved his own ease, and did not much mind Public Business; but his Indolence was abundantly supplied by the Diligence and Application of the Duke of *York*; by whom, aided by a corrupt Ministry, the most Tyrannical and Arbitrary things were transacted in this Reign. As, The severe Persecution in *Scotland* for many Years, wherein many innocent People, for Worshipping God according to their Consciences, lost their Lives; some under colour of a Legal Prosecution; and many more without any: The Soldiers being allowed to be Judges, Witnesses, Jury, and Executioners. The violent Death of the Earl of *Essex* in the Tower; in order to give the better colour to the Murder of my Lord *Russel*, as it may justly be called; since he was Sentenced to Death, for alledged Crimes only, which could not by Law have reached his Life.-----The severe oppressions exercised in consequence of the Act of Uniformity-----The depriving first the City of *London*, and afterwards other Corporations of their Charters and Privileges----- And, by the help of the Duke of *York*, and the Dutchess of *Orleans*, the King was drawn into a private League with the *French* Court, to lower the Pride and Power of the *Dutch*, and Re-establish the

the Catholic Religion in these three Kingdoms.---- Which design, when the Duke of *York* came to the Crown, was carried on in the most barefaced and open manner. Though he commended the Principles of the Church of *England*, and promised to the Council to preserve the Constitution in Church and State as Established by Law; which promise he repeated and confirmed at his Coronation; yet by all his Actions it appeared, he meant nothing less; and Instances need not be given to show that the whole design of this Reign was to establish Popery and Arbitrary Power.

Thus for near a Century did the Nation groan under the most cruel and heavy Oppressions; till at length surfeited and overcharged with such Violences and outrages; it spued out that perverse Generation; and by Unanimous consent of the Nation, the Prince of *Orange* was invited over into *England*; to whose Valour, love of Liberty, and the Protestant Religion, these Nations owe under God, their present happy Constitution, their Redemption from Antichristian Darknes, and all the dreadful Consequences of Slavery and Vassalage. His Memory will ever be dear to every true Englishman who delivered these Nations from such dreadful miseries and unspeakable Calamities: And who, in order to perpetuate our Liberty and Tranquility, secured a succession of Protestant Princes in the illustrious House of HANOVER; which, may God long preserve, to Rule over these Nations, in Mercy and Righteousness.

It is extremely surprising, considering the unspeakable advantages these Nations have Reaped from the Revolution; and the Happiness, Tranquillity,

quillity, secure Possession of our Liberties and Properties, we have enjoyed since the Accession of the now Reigning Family ; that there should be any, and some who would be called Protestants too, who endeavour to blacken the Revolution, as odious and unjust ; who would desire again the Garlick and Onions of Egypt ; and the Subversion of our present happy Constitution. And yet there have always been a factious grumbling Party, that have used their utmost efforts to Poison the minds of People with Factious, Seditious, Slavish, and Traiterous Principles ; and have actually but too well succeeded ; so far, as before, and even now, to raise an unnatural Rebellion, in favour of a Popish Pretender ; Educated at Rome, and bred up in all the Maxims of French and Spanish Tyranny. Though our Most Gracious Sovereign hath been nourishing and bringing them up as Children, yet have they Rebelled against him. But as such attempts have, by the Blessing of God, been hitherto defeated ; so we trust, that the same kind Providence will still watch over us ; maintain what it hath wrought for us ; and render this Popish Conspiracy Fruitless and Abortive.

It is with unspeakable pleasure every true Protestant and lover of his Country must observe, the Vigour, and Unanimity, that hath every where appeared in Britain, and the Northern Parts of this Kingdom, against so horrid and detestable an enterprise. And certainly there is no true Englishman, that hath the least regard for Liberty and the Protestant Religion, or the welfare of Posterity ; and withal considers the oppressive Popish Measures carried on throughout the whole of the *Stu-*

arts Reigns ; that can bear the thought of having a Prince on the Throne, whose pretensions are founded on Hereditary Right and Succession from them : And from whom nothing else can be expected, but carrying on the same Design, of establishing Popish Superstition, and Lawless Power. The calamities these Nations suffered under the Reigns already mentioned ; may be a sufficient warning, never to admit any of the same Tribe, Disposition, or Principles to the Crown of these Realms again : and particularly, ought to rouse the effective Zeal and indignation of every Protestant against this daring and insolent Attempt on his Civil and Religious Liberties.

WHAT ground have we of Joy and Thanksgiving to Almighty God ; that we are not in the same melancholy Situation with our Ancestors ; but that we live under a free Protestant Government, wherein the Laws Prevail ; Dissenters are Protected : All enjoy their Liberties and Properties Undisturbed ; even Papists themselves ; who are as much protected by the Laws, in their rights and Properties, as any Subject the King has ; and are not molested in the Exercise of their Religion, notwithstanding their obnoxious and bloody Principles ; who therefore in point of interest and Gratitude, are obliged to concur in Maintenance and Support of the Present Constitution. Let us stand fast in that Liberty which our Ancestors have transmitted to us at the expence of so much blood and Treasure ; and not suffer our selves, through empty and deceitfull promises, to be rendred secure, and lured again into a Yoke of Bondage. Let us be Dutifull and assisting with our Lives and Fortunes to our Most

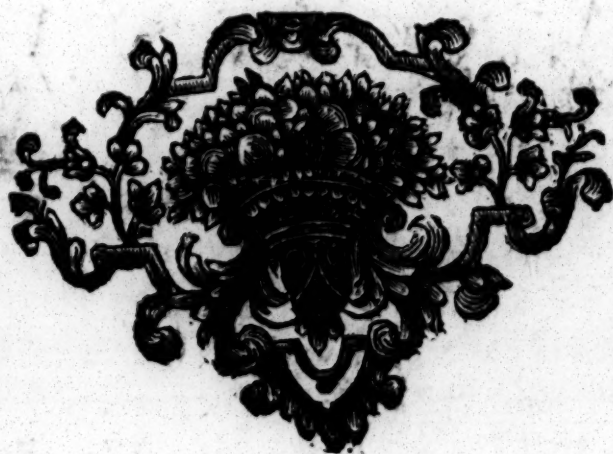
Gracious Sovereign ; of whose benign and Legal Administration, we have for a course of so many Years experienced the happy and beneficial Effects. We have a just and honourable cause ; and these Nations have all reason to trust in the Divine Providence ; and considering the many surprising deliverances they have heretofore met with, to hope, that this black and Hellish Design shall be Defeated in due time ; If God hath not said, That these Banditti are the Rod of his Anger, to Scourge and Chastise these Nations.

BUT, my Brethren, we are a sinfull People, laden with Iniquity ; and considering that Impiety of every kind is at so great a height ; may we not justly be affraid of the Divine Displeasure : And that God may give us up to the will of our Enemies ? Let us therefore repent us of the evil of our doings, and break off our Iniquities by working Righteousness, as the surest foundation of confidence in God, and the most effectual means to secure the Divine Favour and Assistance against our Enemies. It is the Admonition of God to his People, DEUT. xxiii. 9. *When the Host goeth forth against thine Enemies, then keep thee from Every wicked thing.* God always favoured his People in the Day of Battle, accordingly as they were obedient to him, and kept his commandments ; but whenever they departed from him, he gave them up a prey to the Invasions and Incursions of their Enemies. The Captivity they languished under for Seventy Years, was a punishment of their Idolatry and Wickedness ; and at length for their obstinate impenitence, and rejecting the counsel of God against themselves ; they were intirely routed by the Romans, their Civil and Religious

ligious Polity, dissolved ; and what of them escaped that horrid Devastation and Bloody Massacre, sent forth to be Vagabonds through all the Kingdoms of the World. Now these things are our Examples and written for our Admonition, on whom the ends of the world are come. Wherefore let us take care, lest we fall, after the same example of Unbelief and Disobedience.

This is the Fast that God hath chosen, that we loose the Bands of Wickedness, undo the heavy Burthens, and break every Yoke ; then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine Health shall spring forth speedily ; thy righteousness shall go before thee, and the Glory of the Lord, shall be thy rere-ward. ISAI : lvi. 6, 8.

F I N I S.



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 thousand be Vagabonds through all the Kingdoms of
 the World. Now these things are our Examples
 and warning for our Abomination, on whom the ends
 of the world are come. Wherefore let us take care
 lest we fall, after the same example of Unbelief and
 Disobedience.

This is the first that God hath chosen, that we look
 the Birds of Wickedness, and the heavy Burdens,
 and bear every Yoke; then shall thy light break forth
 as the morning, and thine Health shall spring forth
 as the rose; thy righteousness shall go before thee, and
 the Glory of the Lord shall be thy rearward. Isaia
 60. 1. 8.

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